
Patterns of Library Service in Latin America and the Caribbean

PHYLLIS KNIGHT

SOUTH AMERICA, the continent of gigantic mountain ranges, immense plains and mighty rivers; skyscraper cities and Cadillacs in stupendous traffic jams; sleepy peasants jogging along on donkeys; procrastinating government officials; revolutions; of haciendas and siestas: to the outsider these are some of the mental pictures to which the words South America—or Latin America—give rise. How many years have elapsed since these countries have resuscitated themselves from “the slow death that crept upon them from the hands of an old and alien dispensation”? As each new nation has emerged, it has endeavored to make up for lost time by ambitious development schemes and training programs.

And the Caribbean islands, sprinkled across the western sea from Venezuela to Florida, each island a little world in itself, forming with the others a mosaic of diverse cultures inherited from Spain, France, Britain, Holland, and Africa, with the added exotic flavor of India and China: travelers in these islands today are astonished to find signs of rapid progress everywhere. This again is something new; and the transition from slavery to responsible citizenship in five generations can be attributed to a series of campaigns for enlightenment of the masses—dissemination of literature and knowledge through popular libraries being part of the story.

In order to discern the trends of development in library services in Latin America and the Caribbean during the past twenty years it is necessary to examine the main factors conditioning the changes that have occurred.

The ten republics that comprise South America vary in area from 72,000 to 3,289,000 square miles. Argentina extends over 1,080,000 square miles and has a total population of over 20,000,000; of these

Miss Knight is Acting Librarian, Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, Zaria, Nigeria.

nearly 4,000,000 live in its capital city, Buenos Aires, but over the undeveloped rural areas, the population is widely scattered. Brazil covers more than 3,000,000 square miles, and although Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo are among the most modern cities of the New World, vast areas in the Amazon basin are still dense tropical jungle. It is not surprising, therefore, that the problems facing public authorities which establish popular library services in these countries are far more complex than those that confront library authorities in, for example, the British Isles with its 51,000,000 inhabitants occupying an area of 93,000 square miles.

Within recent years Latin America has known a new political and economic stability. This has resulted in an influx of many thousands of people from mainly agricultural rural districts into the industrial towns that have suddenly sprung up and in a radical change in the educational and recreational needs of these people. There has arisen a new emphasis on technical knowledge and an ever-increasing need for technical literature. Many Latin American countries are no longer mainly producers of primary products but have also become important in world markets as producers of manufactured articles.

Another factor responsible for accelerating the tempo of activity has been the great expansion in publishing facilities. The printing presses of Argentina, Chile, and Mexico now make substantial contributions to the literature produced for the Spanish-speaking countries of the world.

Balanced against these factors are certain conditions which have retarded development. Lack of adequate legislation for the machinery of a true public library service has hampered its growth in many countries. A chronic shortage of money has had the same effect. The authorities already had to stretch their budgets to provide basic educational services, and money for a library service was considered second priority. Today, the system of securing bookstock by "exchange relations" is still widely used to augment inadequate book votes in both public and special libraries. In the past it has been difficult and in some cases impossible to recruit trained librarians, mainly because no fully established library schools existed in Latin America before 1940. In spite of carefully-planned educational programs, the rate of illiteracy in some of the Latin American countries is still high. Argentina, Cuba, Chile, and Panama have the largest literate populations, and these countries are among those which have taken the greatest strides ahead in the public library movement.

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Conditions similar to those in Latin America existed in the West Indian islands when E. A. Savage made his survey of the libraries of Bermuda, the Bahamas, the British West Indies, British Guiana, British Honduras, Puerto Rico and the American Virgin Islands in 1934.¹ The islands themselves are more thickly populated than the countries of Latin America (Barbados boasts the fantastic population density of 1,398 persons per square mile), but distances between them constitute a formidable barrier, especially as communications are expensive and often unreliable; and at the time of the Savage report there were five separate governmental units to take into consideration in the territory the projected library service was to embrace.

N. G. Fisher in his later report in 1953, *Library Aspects of the Caribbean Seminar*,² pointed out that if an adequate library service was to be established and maintained in the Caribbean islands, financial support must come from outside. Time has proved this to be a very accurate appraisal, because the only significant developments that have taken place in these islands have been brought about, first by Carnegie Corporation funds, and then by British Council and Colonial Development and Welfare aid. As in Latin America, it was an arduous task persuading government authorities that library services were deserving of substantial financial support.

Nevertheless, in the library world of the Caribbean and Latin America the past twenty years show achievements such as had never been known in these areas before. The "Fairy Godmother" waved her wand and the man-in-the-street in the British West Indies received the wonderful boon of a free public library service. Some years later when another "Fairy Godmother"—Unesco—waved her wand at Medellín in Colombia, it took some time for users of the new public library to grasp the fact that they could borrow a book to take home without paying an additional tax.

Improvements in library services have been marked only in those countries where satisfactory legislation has been enacted. In Panama, for example, a change of legislation in 1946 inaugurated a public library system.

On the other hand, many Latin American libraries still function under ordinances now in need of revision. The statutes at present in force in Brazil, Uruguay, and Chile are modelled on Argentina's library law instituted by President Sarmiento more than fifty years ago. Argentina has kept abreast of changing ideas by amending its statutes and introducing new legislation. Public libraries are now controlled

by regulations drawn up by the Commission for the Promotion of Popular Libraries in 1946. Several years later the Instituto Bibliotecológico at the National University in Buenos Aires was created by ordinance. More recently still the newly-formed Federation of Librarians has decided that there is need for completely new regulations covering the status, qualifications, and remuneration of professional librarians, and a Librarians' Statute is being drafted for submission to the government.

This defined status for librarians is recognized in the Latin American library world to be essential. It has already been achieved in Cuba where Decree Law No. 2004 of 1955 specifies that graduates of the school of librarianship at the Havana University are "deemed to be legally and officially qualified for the exercise of the profession. . ." Legislation has also been used as a means of raising money for library services in Cuba. In 1941 a new law imposed a duty of .005 pesos on every sack of sugar produced in order to pay for the new national library.

In the British West Indian islands, inauguration of the Eastern Caribbean Library Scheme and implementation of the Bateson Report³ in 1945 set off a chain reaction that resulted in changed legislation in almost every island. Jamaica led the way with the Jamaica Library Act of 1949, followed, also in 1949, by Trinidad. Thereafter the law was amended in Grenada, St. Kitts, Dominica, Nevis, St. Lucia, Antigua and most recently in St. Vincent in 1950 and Montserrat in 1951. Barbados required no change in legislation as machinery for the existence of a free library service had been available since 1847.

The law as it existed in British Guiana covered Georgetown, its capital, only. Subsequent amendments now allow the public library to cover the regions immediately outside.

The Jubilee Public Library Service in British Honduras functions under an ordinance passed in 1935 and its subsequent amendments. Qualified librarians there, however, are not satisfied with the scope of existing laws, and a bill is to be placed before the Legislative Assembly for the enactment of new library statutes.

In the American Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, the Library Services Act passed by the United States Congress in 1956 has been responsible for great expansion in library services.

The capital cities of all Latin American countries possess national libraries. Many of them house valuable collections, but due to a general lack of organization some have never been fully exploited. A home

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lending service has been the exception rather than the rule with the result that students have been forced to use their national libraries for reference purposes only. In El Salvador, where the National Library operates four branches in the city of San Salvador, and in Guatemala and Costa Rica attempts have been made to offer a public service, but in each case they have fallen short of standards accepted in countries with well established services.

Argentina stands out as one of the Latin American countries with a progressive policy towards its popular libraries. In the past there have been hundreds of small libraries of varying degrees of organization and efficiency, some of them established and operated by groups of people who recognized the need for a library service and were prepared to do what they could to better the situation. In many municipal libraries the staff was voluntary and untrained. In 1946 the Commission for the Promotion of Popular Libraries carried out a survey of all libraries offering service to the public with a view to taking such action as it considered necessary for the standardization of practice and the improvement of their administration. One aspect of the situation that caused great concern was the dire lack of professional librarians. A direct result of the recommendations of this Commission was the setting up of two new programs of library training in Buenos Aires. The Commission has also been responsible for obtaining increased subventions for several libraries, for making substantial contributions to their stocks by gifts of books and for the publication of the *Guía de Bibliotecas Argentinas* which has been invaluable in promoting interlending among libraries.⁴

Up till 1946 the National Library at Panama City offered reference service only. In that year it began to function as a Department of Libraries and Exchanges under the Ministry of Education. Immediately a program covering the whole country was planned. The first need was an increased book vote which was provided by the government. The country was then divided up into ten zones, each having its own central library. Where it was impossible or not feasible to establish a branch library a deposit station was set up, the intention being that as soon as these stations, temporarily manned by voluntary unpaid librarians, became large enough to warrant a branch, provision would be made for its establishment and for the salary of a librarian. In order that the service provided by deposit stations should be as effective as possible, the voluntary staff were given instructions on basic library techniques.⁵ Unfortunately, funds were inadequate for

the program as planned, but a stout framework has been constructed and embellishments can be made as time and money permit.

In Brazil steady economic prosperity over the past twenty years has resulted in the rapid development of fundamental educational programs. Library services in this country were so well advanced that as far back as 1942 the Serviço de Intercambio de Catalogação, a division of the Departamento Administrativo do Serviço Público was able to initiate a cooperative cataloging scheme with printed cards, cataloged in accordance with the Vatican Code, for the benefit of any Brazilian library wishing to participate in the scheme. The Instituto Nacional do Livro functions as a regional headquarters offering help to libraries all over the country, especially to those in poor and backward rural districts. It supplies them with books and, more important still, with technical assistance. Every method of transportation from the airplane to the canoe is employed by this Institute in order to reach inaccessible parts of the country. Valuable work is also done by the Industrial Social Service (S.E.S.I.) established and organized by the National Confederation of Industry. Since January 1948, S.E.S.I. has included among its adult education activities the operation of a traveling library carrying book chests for delivery to service points all over the country. "The object . . . is to provide industrial workers with reading matter of an improving nature and also with wholesome recreation for their leisure hours."⁶

When Unesco decided to hold a librarians' conference on Latin American soil, the choice of São Paulo was an easy one. This ultra-modern city with its municipal library twenty-four stories high, provided visiting conference librarians with excellent examples not only of public but also of university and special library services. In addition there was a mobile library service operating in suburban areas. The conference, which brought together 119 Latin American librarians from sixteen different countries,⁷ has contributed more than any other single event towards stimulating interest in bibliographical activities. It has fostered a sense of camaraderie among librarians and has spurred them on to great achievements in the past eight years.

Most spectacular among the results of the São Paulo Conference was the Unesco Pilot Project at Medellin in Colombia. To those who have enjoyed the benefits of public library service all their lives, the miracle of Medellin will not appear in all its glory. But librarians at work in the Caribbean have come to accept a heart-rending sight as part of the day's work—that of children waiting outside the libraries and

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around the bookmobiles week after week, with that unmistakable look of longing and undefeated hope in their eyes which only the coveted library ticket will satisfy.

The story of the creation of the Medellín library is now a familiar one, but because of its significance in the pattern of development it is appropriate to trace its history. The agreement between Unesco and the government of Colombia that brought the library into existence stipulated that the project should be operated jointly for the first five years before it became autonomous. It is now an independent institution managed by a board and financed only by the government. The reason for the choice of the site in Medellín is worthy of mention; a thickly populated industrial area in a district with four universities was selected. Assurance was obtained beforehand that the local educational and municipal authorities were willing to accept this new concept of a library service as an essential part of the social and cultural lives of their citizens.

As it turned out, the project was a resounding success, above all because it demonstrated to the rest of Latin America the tremendous impact that books can make upon peoples' lives. The ideal conditions under which it operated made a heavy program of extension work linked with books possible—story hours for children followed by discussions, concerts for adults and children from a well selected gramophone library, organization of listeners' groups—all those services which to the average librarian in an underdeveloped country are textbook recommendations became a reality which could be witnessed and copied by other Latin American countries. When the first branch library was opened six miles from the new central library, it was not one of the upper class residential suburbs that was chosen but an overcrowded working class area; thus the library is stretching out its strong arms to reach those who most need its services.

The coordination of library services within each country has been one of the aims of Latin American professional librarians in recent years. This has been achieved in Medellín and has resulted in improvement in the assistance which the country's bibliographical resources can render to student and worker.

The changing pattern in popular library services was reflected in other parts of Colombia. When the Marco Fidel Suárez Library was opened at Bello, a thickly populated industrial town, the library authorities were so conscious of the potentialities of the new service that they spared no pains to provide the best that was available. Technical

advice on planning and organization was sought and given by the director of the Medellin library and the building was designed by the same architects.

In 1957 Peru opened its new Biblioteca Publica Municipal at Callao, a busy port near the capital city of Lima, with a large working class population, mostly dock workers. A point of interest in this particular project is that the municipal authorities and the Ministry of Education collaborated with excellent results. As in Colombia the influence of the São Paulo Conference is evident; the new library provides a service the like of which has never before been witnessed in Callao. It is manned by trained librarians; it has open access; it provides not only reference facilities but also a home lending service which is not to be taken for granted in Latin America. To complement the service offered by the central library, Unesco has donated a book-mobile so that coverage includes those who are unable to make use of the central library. The children's library, attractive, up-to-date and operated on American lines, has been a huge success. A full program of extension work is being conducted with all the trimmings that American children enjoy. Since this service was a new venture some experiments in the reading ability and tastes of the children were done by the library staff so that book selectors could gauge the effectiveness of the literature provided and be guided in their future choice.

In the West Indies activity has been channelled in several uncoordinated streams. Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and, to some extent, Puerto Rico, have identified themselves with developments in Latin America. The French West Indies and the Netherlands Antilles have followed separate patterns. Jamaica, the British Eastern Caribbean, British Honduras, and British Guiana have grown simultaneously along similar lines; partly because of geographical isolation the Bahamas have not been able to identify themselves with developments in the other British territories. The American Virgin Islands, the only English speaking territories not under British rule, have also taken an independent course, but they have managed to overcome this separation from the other islands by maintaining an interlending service with the British Virgin Islands.

In Cuba, as in Argentina, there are a number of small uncoordinated libraries, some of them financed by the government and some by private enterprise. Municipal libraries exist but with few exceptions they only scratch the surface of popular needs. In 1949 the Biblioteca Pública de la Sociedad Economica de Amigos del País, partly sup-

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ported by government funds, decided to reorganize its services. The Library of Congress, always interested in improvement of library services in the Caribbean, sent expert help, and funds for a new building were supplied by the government.⁸ During the past ten years thousands have benefited by the greatly increased reference facilities this new public library offers. In February 1958, another new library, the Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, was opened to the public with every feature that can be desired of a national library. Lending and reference sections, a museum, a music room, a smoking room, workshops, a theatre, an exhibition room, and even a snack bar are included. One other feature deserves special mention—a room intended for the research worker where the material on which he is working can be reserved for him as long as he needs it.

Puerto Rico's public library headquarters in San Juan is one of many Carnegie libraries established in the West Indies at the beginning of this century.⁹ A considerable increase in the book vote in 1956 enabled the library authorities to achieve complete coverage of the island with a service which now has a total of three hundred branch libraries and eighteen bookmobiles in operation.

Under the same scheme of expansion, the American Virgin Islands were able to make improvements in their library services. The Bureau of Libraries and Museums of the Department of Education is responsible for all public and school library services. It is a vigorous active body. Since 1956 the public library at St. Thomas has established a branch library on the island of St. Croix with a bookmobile to complement its services.

In the Netherlands Antilles a unique pattern of development has occurred. In the small population of 187,000 there is a predominance of Dutch-speaking people, but there are also sizable minorities who speak English, Spanish, German, and French. In addition, the local patois Papiamentu, which is a delightful *melée* of English, Dutch, and Spanish, is also widely spoken. Library services are specially geared to cope with this diversity of languages. A union catalog has been printed in four languages, and Aruba's library is designated to be the repository for the rapidly growing collection of literature and fugitive material in Papiamentu.

In Curaçao the Openbare Leeszaalen Bibliotheek under the care of the Department of Education has been completely reorganized since it moved to new premises, a wing of the Department, in 1945.¹⁰ This service is complemented by the Stichting Wetenschap Pelijke Biblio-

theek (Scientific Library Foundation), established in 1950 as a free library open to the public and supported by government funds. This latter deals with requests for specialized material from a bookstock which covers pure science, technology, classical languages, and theology. To facilitate the work of students and research workers the lending period for books and periodicals is one month. A union catalog of all technical books in the Netherlands Antilles is maintained and micro-reading apparatus is provided.

The public library in Aruba was established in 1949 in a splendid new two-story building in Oranjestad. Aruba has one of the largest oil refineries in this part of the world and the public library has to cater for a number of workers pouring in from neighboring islands. The demands on the new library were so great that by 1951 the original circulation figures were almost doubled.¹¹ By 1952 the library service had gained enough strength to open a branch library on the tiny island of St. Nicholas; by 1958 this venture had grown to a point where it justified a full scale library. A special collection of books in the Frisian language is included among the bookstock in the Aruba Public Library for the benefit of the island's Frisian families. In the islands of Bonaire, Saba, and St. Maarten, library services have been established, but they are still in the embryonic stage.

In Surinam (Dutch Guiana) the Colonial Library founded more than one hundred years ago has been reorganized several times. Among its holdings is a large collection of very rare old maps of the Caribbean area.

Haiti's National Library, opened in 1939, has now outgrown its original one room. The library authorities are concentrating simultaneously on programs of building up a reference stock and acquiring valuable special collections; the Benjamin Vincent Library and the Ad-hémar Auguste Library, together comprising about 3,000 volumes of local interest, have been added recently.

The public library attached to the Schoelcher Musée of Martinique in the French West Indies houses an excellent reference library which functions in the dual capacity of a national and reference library for the island's student population and research workers. In addition, it is now establishing a service to rural areas. Guadeloupe's Bibliothèque Populaire Communale, opened in 1957, is still a very modest collection.

A survey of developments in public library services in the British West Indies since 1940 covers practically the entire history of the public library movement in these islands; certainly it includes all the sig-

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nificant developments. At the turn of the century Carnegie libraries had been established in certain islands, but in every case their history was the same; they eked out a meager existence on inadequate votes, supplemented by dwindling subscriptions, and contributed nothing to intellectual and cultural development. With few exceptions a free public library service was unknown. The education authorities seemed unable to appreciate that a good library service would complement their efforts at popular education. Today expenditures on library services in the Eastern Caribbean are still less than two per cent of the money voted for education.¹² Publication of the Savage report in 1934 brought the shortcomings sharply into focus.

The first definite advance was made when the Trinidad government in 1941 accepted the generous offer of \$70,000 from the Carnegie Corporation of New York for the establishment of a free library service, first to cover Trinidad and Tobago and then, with an additional sum, to expand and cover the entire Eastern Caribbean. Slowly and arduously a service, complete with bookmobiles, was established in Trinidad and a regional branch was opened in Tobago. The second part of the scheme—that of inaugurating library services in the other islands—was then launched. Gradually, out of administrative shambles and disorganization, a new well-founded service arose. Users of the new libraries were amazed at the tremendous potentialities which lay behind this new accessibility of reading matter. The Director of Trinidad's Central Library in his Progress Report for 1953-58 stated "in the rural areas of the West Indies 'do it yourself' is not a slogan for the pleasant occupation of leisure hours; it is a prerequisite of any betterment of life and often of very existence."¹³ No more fitting comment on the place of books in this region could be made.

As in Latin America, coordination of library services was considered essential. A regional library was set up in Trinidad to maintain contact between library services in the area, provide a union catalog of their holdings, promote interlending and in general act as a bibliographical center for the region. Although it has more than proved its worth during the years of its existence, the regional library has had to fight for survival. It has now been combined with the central library in Trinidad and continues to give vital service to the libraries of the Eastern Caribbean.¹⁴

Jamaica has carried out a parallel program of development. Formerly, the library of the Institute of Jamaica took the place of a national library. It has now been able to relinquish this function and to con-

centrate on national archives.

The Jamaica Library Service, planned in accordance with recommendations of the 1945 Bateson report, is operated by a board the membership of which includes representatives from the Department of Education, the British Council, and the University College of the West Indies. Its progress since 1949 has been remarkable. By 1955 the service was manned entirely by a locally recruited staff. All parishes have established a library service and nine of them have their own buildings, all erected since 1949. In 1958 the joint premises of the headquarters building and the St. Andrew's Parish Library were opened in Kingston¹⁵ and the first bookmobile, painted a gay red and white, began to operate.

Although British Honduras belongs geographically to Central America, its library services, initiated in 1935 with Carnegie Corporation funds, have developed in tune with the British Caribbean. Expansion at first was slow; it was not until 1954 that coverage was achieved with a central library and twenty-four service points scattered throughout the country. It is estimated that about 60 per cent of the 90,000 inhabitants now have access to public library books. In 1957 a four-year development plan was instituted and it is intended to review the situation in 1960 and consider further developments, among them a mobile library service.

University and special libraries were among the first to be established in Latin American countries. In all these countries "libraries came into being as they were needed by specific groups. In most cases the needs were dictated by academic research."¹⁶ These libraries filled the requirements of the student and research worker where no other efficient services existed for this purpose. Today many fine libraries are attached to agricultural experiment stations and faculties of national universities. Some of these are manned by qualified librarians and scholars and give a high standard of service. Two of Puerto Rico's strongest reference libraries, for example, are attached to the University at Río Piedras and the College of Agriculture at Mayaguez.

In university librarianship the pattern in the past has been a network of autonomous libraries of vastly varying stocks. Some have concentrated on building up as comprehensive a stock of reference books as funds would permit, others have been able to acquire valuable special collections. Nor has the pattern of administration in these libraries been uniform.

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In Cuba the University of Havana has a main library and a number of faculty libraries. When another state university was established at Santiago de Cuba in Oriente in 1949, its library services were organized independently and there is no evidence of any attempt at conformity or coordination in the bibliographical activities of the two bodies.

In Argentina a trend towards centralization may be seen. In 1953 a library institute was established with the linking up of the university library resources of that country as one of its chief aims. Argentina's newest university has a centralized library service modelled on American lines.¹⁷

In Mexico's new university there is a clear indication that the importance of the library in the university's activities continues to increase. The library, built on a modular plan, is the largest building on the campus. Special attention has been paid to lighting arrangements and suppression of sound and, as regards fenestration, arrangements have been made to keep sunlight away from books since its effect has been found to be detrimental.

There are several small special libraries attached to government departments in the British Caribbean. Although they do valuable work, the over-all effectiveness could be vastly improved if some policy with regard to their organization and administration could be determined. The only two libraries of university standard are the library attached to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad which has one of the best specialized collections in the world, and the library of the University College of the West Indies in Jamaica. The latter was opened in 1952 and after enduring the ravages of a hurricane and a fire has rebuilt its stock in record time. In addition to the librarian there are six other professional members of staff, all graduates, and a high standard of service has been achieved. The bindery established at the University College is an experiment in co-operation: it is a joint undertaking with the Jamaica Library Service which pays half the cost of upkeep.

The Caribbean Commission's library at their Central Secretariat in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, has the makings of a national library for the newly formed Federation of The West Indies. It has an excellent collection of books, including a valuable West Indian history section.

In Latin America school libraries exist at all levels of education—primary, secondary, and college. In some countries their establishment has been made mandatory by law, but it has been found that this

does not necessarily produce a library of satisfactory standard. High school students in some countries are accustomed to using their national libraries for reference purposes, with indifferent results as their needs are best filled by provision of libraries intended for their particular requirements.

Two distinct trends are discernible. One is that the school library should be part of a national plan as exemplified in Cuba, Chile, and Puerto Rico. In Cuba, education authorities carried out a survey of library provision for the high school student and published a list of books which should form a basic collection in secondary schools. In Chile, also as a result of a survey, it was recommended that there should be in the Ministry of Education a special section devoted to school libraries and that a committee should be formed to select literature suitable for students. In Puerto Rico, the school library service, started in 1956, was organized on a nationwide basis. There had been an increase in funds available for library services so that it was possible to execute the program as planned and achieve almost complete coverage of the island's schools.

The other distinct trend has been in the selection, training, and status of the school librarian. It is generally agreed that library consciousness has to be awakened and carefully nurtured in the average school child in Latin America, even in high schools and colleges. C. V. Penna in his paper on Latin American libraries stated that "the use of the textbook and of class notes is the custom in Latin American countries and [school] libraries are not generally considered necessary."¹⁸ Because of this, library associations in some of the South American countries have recommended that the school librarian should be a teacher with library training in order that school libraries can relate their activities to the school syllabus and students can form the habit of using the school library. In Chile, teachers are encouraged to take up school librarianship as it is believed that teacher training is beneficial in the school library. A recommendation endorsed by many Latin American librarians is that a course in school librarianship should be included in teachers' training colleges.

An interesting system of staffing is in operation in Mexico City College. There each member of the library staff also participates in the teaching or research program of the college. This, it is felt, makes for better day-to-day relations between students and library staff.¹⁹

The school library movement is still in its infancy in the English-speaking territories of the Caribbean. Developments in this area have

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been uniform in conception and practice. Jamaica was able to start a mobile library service for schools in 1957. It is operated by the Jamaica Library Service on behalf of the Ministry of Education. In the Eastern Caribbean an attempt has been made to include schools in the general public library service. It is envisaged that when money and staff are available a separate scheme will be organized. In British Honduras several uncoordinated school libraries were replaced by a service recently started and operated by the Department of Education. In the American Virgin Islands a school library service, also operated by the Department of Education, is now functioning.

Library associations in the Latin American countries have greatly increased in strength and influence, especially during the past ten years. There is every indication that in the future they will direct the forward movement in both popular and special libraries, as well as press for satisfactory legislation governing libraries and insure that professional librarians receive remuneration commensurate with that received by their colleagues in other parts of the world. Their other vital function will be the production of professional literature for libraries in the Spanish-speaking countries of the world.

Recently they have been responsible for organizing "library days"—that is, conferences where professional librarians meet and discuss common problems, pass resolutions and carry out measures for their mutual benefit. Since the São Paulo Conference, "library days" have been organized in Panama, Cuba, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico.

In Cuba, the Asociación Bibliotecaria Cubana, established in 1939, was completely reorganized and launched afresh in 1949 with a new constitution and new vigor, since which date conferences have been held every year. Among the innovations that this new association has influenced were establishment of Cuba's two library schools and its new national library. In 1958 the association organized its first annual reading week as a publicity campaign aimed at increasing the interest of both adults and juveniles in books. Reading lists and bibliographies were compiled and distributed to libraries, book-shops, schools, and other educational institutions. The *Boletín de la Asociación Cubana de Bibliotecarios* has supplied Cuban librarians with a high standard of professional literature over the past ten years.

As a result of a library congress in Buenos Aires in 1954, seventeen associations in Argentina banded together and established a Federation of Librarians. Argentinian library associations were partly re-

sponsible for the two full-scale schools of librarianship that exist in the country; they issue a well-edited monthly information bulletin which has a wide circulation.

The Asociación Colombiana de Bibliotecarios is making improvement of the status of professional librarians one of its chief aims. In the first number of its bulletin, which appeared in 1957, its recommendations on this subject are set out.

The Asociación Peruana de Bibliotecarios encourages contributors to its professional journal to discuss problems of administration and extension work that exist at all levels of the service. In August of 1958 the association organized the first Peruvian seminar on librarianship in collaboration with the National Library. A recent issue of its journal details a plan for a national service for schools drawn up by the Unesco Regional Centre for the Western Hemisphere in Havana.

In Honduras the organization of a popular library service to both urban and rural areas was on the agenda of the first Honduran "library days" organized under the auspices of the Asociación de Bibliotecarios at the capital city Tegucigalpa.

Specialized branches of library associations are springing up all over Latin America; in various places children's librarians, university librarians, school librarians, and librarians at work in medical and agricultural libraries have formed their own associations. Recently the Asociación Mexicana de Bibliotecarios established its first specialized branch, the Asociación de Bibliotecarios Universitarios y de Institutos de Enseñanza. This body has already held one successful conference.

In the English-speaking Caribbean only one library association exists, the Jamaican Library Association inaugurated in 1949. So far no attempt has been made to form an association of all librarians at work in these territories.

In developments in Latin America since 1950 there is evidence of an emphasis on the need for documentation centers. The Centro de Documentación Científica y Técnica de México is the largest institution of its kind in this part of the world. It was established with the intention that it should serve the whole of Latin America. Like the pilot project at Medellín, it was planned and organized in collaboration with Unesco who operated it in conjunction with the Mexican government for three years before handing it over, in 1954, to specially trained Mexican scientists.¹⁹ Since then it has been carrying out the important function of collecting scientific and technical information from world periodical literature with a special coverage of over

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seven hundred scientific journals published in Latin America. This information has been made available not only to the research workers and the manufacturing firms in Latin America, but to the rest of the world as well. In its monthly bulletin, similar in style to the *World List of Scientific Periodicals*, there are abstracts from over 2,000 journals and an English summary of each abstract to facilitate usefulness in the English-speaking world. One of the additional services of the documentation center is a translation service.

Of the other institutions of this kind in Latin America two are in Argentina, the Instituto Bibliotecológico attached to the University of Buenos Aires and the Instituto Nacional de Documentación which was organized by Unesco, and one in Brazil, the Instituto Brasileiro de Bibliografia e Documentação. Uruguay's documentation center, the Centro de Cooperación Científica para la América Latina in Montevideo, is also a Unesco project. The Documentation Section of the Instituto Centro Americano de Investigación y Tecnología Industrial at Guatemala City has functioned as a bibliographical center since 1956. The Institute is sponsored by the United Nations with the aim of carrying on technological research for the governments of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

In the English-speaking Caribbean there are no institutions engaged solely in the work of documentation, but the University College of the West Indies and the library of the Caribbean Commission have carried out valuable work in this field in recent years.

The other new development, the importance of which has been stressed and borne out by recent activity, is the compilation of national bibliographies for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The International Advisory Committee on Bibliography has working groups in almost every country of Latin America. One such group, the Colombian Bibliographical Group, formed as a result of the Unesco Conference on Bibliographical Services in 1950, has enlisted the aid of all specialist and university libraries in compiling a current Colombian bibliography.

Since 1950 three seminars have taken place which have accelerated the pace of bibliographical work in Latin American countries—the Pilot Bibliographical Seminar at Havana in 1955, the "library days" conference held in Montevideo in 1957, and the Bibliographical Seminar of Central America and the Caribbean in 1958.

At the Bibliographical Seminar in Cuba, the most important decision taken was that an annual bibliography covering the complete

output of literature of all participating countries should be inaugurated. It was agreed that retrospective bibliographies documenting the whole literature of each country should also be compiled.

In Montevideo in 1957, at the "library days" conference, the bibliographical working party resolved to take immediate action towards preparing bibliographies covering the literature of the River Plate countries.

The Bibliographical Seminar of 1958 organized by the Panamanian Bibliographical Group with the cooperation of the Unesco Regional Office for the Western Hemisphere had representatives from Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Puerto Rico. It was recommended that publication of the *Bibliografía de Centroamérica y del Caribe* should be continued with the addition of Mexico to the countries included, and that two current bibliographies, one covering Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay, and one covering Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela, should be compiled.

The following are among the national bibliographies of Latin America and the Caribbean:

Bibliografía de Centroamérica y del Caribe, vol. 1. (Includes Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Puerto Rico),

Anuario Bibliográfico Cubano,
Anuario Bibliográfico Argentino,
Indice Bibliográfico Guatemalteco,
Anuario Bibliográfico Dominicano,
Anuario Bibliográfico Venezolano,
Bibliografía Salvadoreña, and
Current Caribbean Bibliography.

It is said that one touch of hatred makes the whole world kin. Common problems produce the same effect and there is every indication that Latin American library services, inextricably interwoven because of similarities in existing conditions and plans for the future, will continue to grow together.

Between the mountains and the ocean, in the skyscraper cities, and in many small villages, over most of South America, there are now libraries. The movement has gained so much momentum in recent

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years that it is impossible to visualize any force that can check its forward surge.

Similarly, on the asphalt roads of the Caribbean islands, the book-mobiles now carry their modern treasure-trove of carefully chosen books, never far from sight of the sea, always in touch with sources of knowledge both at home and beyond that small community in which an island is a world!

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